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NATIONWIDE EPIDEMIOLOGIC STUDY OF CHILD ABUSE. PROGRESS REPORT.

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THE PROGRESS REPORT ON THE NATIONWIDE EPIDEMIOLOGIC STUDY OF CHILD ABUSE REVIEWED THE STUDY FOCI OF THE SURVEY, THE SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION, THE BASIC AND COMPREHENSIVE LEVELS OF THE DATA COLLECTION, AND PARTICIPATION OF TWO NON-PUBLIC AGENCIES FOR ESTIMATES AND COMPARISON. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF A CALIFORNIA PILOT STUDY ON CHILD ABUSE WERE REPORTED WITH A TABLE OF NON-ABUSE CASES, A SUMMARY OF 60 CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS, HOUSEHOLDS, HOUSEHOLD HEADS, PERPETRATORS, AND CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE INCIDENT, AND 14 OBSERVATIONS DRAWN FROM THE DATA. THE FINAL REPORT OF THE 1965 SURVEY OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES CONCERNING CHILD ABUSE HAD BEEN DELAYED. REPORTS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF INCOMING INFORMATION WERE PRESENTED IN 1966, AT 12 CONFERENCES LISTED. FIELD WORK AND DATA COLLECTION WILL BE CONCLUDED BY JUNE 30, 1968. PROCESSING, ANALYSIS, REPORTING, AND INTERPRETATION WILL BE CONCLUDED BY JUNE 30, 1969, AND WILL INCLUDE A CLINICAL INTERVIEW SUBSTUDY IN TWO SAMPLING UNITS. ADDITIONAL STAGES IN THE PROPOSAL WILL ALSO BE INVESTIGATED. (WR)

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BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

THE FLORENCE HELLER GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR ADVANCED STUDIES IN SOCIAL WELFARE

Nationwide Epidemiologic Study of Child Abuse

Progress Report

July 1, 1966 to February 15, 1967

Waltham, Massachusetts

CG 000 886

INTRODUCTION

This paper reviews the initial phase (7 ½ months) of a nationwide survey of child abuse incidents reported through legally established channels. This survey is designed to obtain information on the following issues:

1) The incidence rate of legally reported child abuse throughout the United States, and the pattern of distribution of child abuse in selected segments of the U.S. population.

2) Characteristics of individuals, and of family or household units involved in legally reported incidents of child abuse.

3) Detailed circumstances surrounding and precipitating incidents of legally reported child abuse.

4) Measures taken by health, welfare and law enforcement authorities with regard to legally reported incidents of child abuse.

The foregoing study foci, the definition of child abuse and conceptual framework underlying this study, the study plan, and certain preliminary findings are discussed in a separate paper attached to this material.

SCOPE OF SURVEY

During the period reviewed here, arrangements were set up for the participation in the study of all fifty states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Of these fifty-three jurisdictions, two (Hawaii and Puerto Rico) do not yet have child abuse reporting legislation but expect to pass such legislation shortly. In forty-three states, child abuse reporting is mandatory although provisions of the laws vary considerably from state to state. In six states, Alaska, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas and Washington, reporting is discretionary.

The survey is designed to collect data on every incident occurring between January 1, 1967 and December 31, 1967. Data are being collected on two levels which are linked to each other by means of a central control system. The "Basic Level" aims to gather basic information on every incident occurring throughout the study year. The "Comprehensive Level" aims to examine more thoroughly incidents occurring in specially selected sample areas throughout the year.

Basic Level - Every participating state and territory, with the partial exception of Texas and Pennsylvania, has set up a central registry to which every incident of suspected child abuse is reported by the legally designated recipients on the local level. The registries in turn forward copies of each report received by them to the study office at Brandeis University. Registries initiated operation throughout the nation on or before January 1, 1967. In many states registries were operating much earlier and this made possible pre-testing of procedures in several jurisdictions. Central registries are maintained mainly by state welfare departments. In some states health departments, the Attorney General's office, or the Justice Department operate the registries. In setting up the registries, consideration was given in each state to its unique administrative pattern.

A standardized, two-page pre-coded child abuse report form has been developed, tested and revised by the study (see attached). This form fits the provisions of state laws on child abuse reporting. It gathers basic data on the abused child, his parent or parent substitute, the suspected abuser, the nature of the abuse, and the reporting source. The language of the form is simple and all instructions are incorporated into the form. The form comes in triplicate, equipped with carbon paper. It is suitable for automated data processing. The form is designed to serve the dual purpose of a research instrument as well as a tool for routine reporting within states. To protect confidentiality states need not include names of children, parents, and suspected perpetrators on the copy of the report form which is forwarded to the study.

An important achievement of the study has been the fact that with the exception of five states, all other states and territories adopted the standard child abuse report form as their official state report form. The significance of this nearly nationwide acceptance of a standard report form seems considerable in view of the many difficulties in achieving standardized nationwide reporting procedures on social welfare phenomena. The states which elected not to adopt the standard form are California, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Texas. Nevada and North Carolina, however, incorporated the standard form in a slightly more comprehensive form which meets their own administrative requirements. In California, child abuse reporting is handled by police and the State Department of Justice. Police crime reports are used for reporting to the central registry in the Criminal Investigation and Identification Division of the Justice Department and it proved impossible to change this established procedure. Pennsylvania developed its own report form using the study form as a general guide. Texas does not use a special child abuse report form because of legal questions concerning the maintenance of a central registry. Instead, child abuse incidents are identified on standard child welfare statistical report cards and copies of these cards are being shared with the study.

All reports on suspected child abuse received by central registries are forwarded to the study office where they are edited and punched on cards in preparation for automated processing. Reports from the five states which do not use the standard form are transferred to the form by study staff. This procedure is quite time consuming especially with regard to the large volume of California narrative crime reports.

Editing also involves elimination of reports which do not concern physical child abuse, since in several states including California, neglect and other offenses against minors are reported under child abuse report laws and are forwarded by central registries to the study office. Because of this, each report must be screened against the standard definition of child abuse which has been developed for the study. Reports which lack data for reaching a decision concerning inclusion or elimination of a case are held for further exploration by the regional directors of the study staff. In this way, erroneous decisions will be kept at a minimum.

One as yet unresolved issue concerning the basic level of data gathering is the fact that reports which reach the study are reports of suspected rather than established abuse. While in many cases it may never become known with certainty whether abuse occurred or not, in some cases investigation may reveal that suspicions were not justified. Explorations are currently in progress with all participating states concerning the development of simple follow-up procedures by means of which central registries and the study office could be notified of cases in relation to which abuse has been ruled out. A mechanism has been developed for channeling this one-item, follow-up information to the study. States that agree to provide follow-up information will receive punched IBM cards for each case reported by them to the study. If the case is subsequently ruled out as abuse on the basis of investigation, the state registry returns the card with an appropriate notation to the study office. It is hoped that many states will consent to participate in this refinement of the basic level of the study.

Comprehensive Level - The comprehensive level of data collection is being carried out in a set of sampling units which were selected in a manner that assures representativeness for the entire United States. So far, forty sampling units have been selected. Ten of these, the most populous cities in the United States, were included arbitrarily. The remaining thirty were drawn at random from a list of all components of SMSA's, stratified by population size, type of component (core city or non-core component) and study region. (See attached sample design.) A further sample will be drawn shortly to represent incidents from outside SMSA's.

With the exception of Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, all pre-selected sampling units have agreed to participate in the comprehensive level of the study. It is hoped that arrangements can still be worked out with the two major cities where prevailing administrative difficulties did not permit participation in this aspect of the study. Since these two cities were included in the sample arbitrarily and are therefore self-representative, their non-participation would not seriously affect the efficiency of the sampling design.

All sampling units with the exception of those located in Arizona, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania and Washington have agreed to complete the comprehensive study schedules during agency working time. This arrangement proved unfeasible in the seven states listed above because of the large volume of cases expected; and severe problems in staffing and regular case coverage. Fee payments have therefore been approved for these sample units at the rate of $15 per completed case.

The nature of the data to be collected by the comprehensive level of the study is reflected in the attached research schedules "A" and "B". These schedules were developed on the basis of a pilot study in California and in consultation with professional staff in the states. The schedules were distributed to field staff in sampling units prior to the beginning of the study year. The regional directors of the study discussed and interpreted the schedules to field staff in sample units and will continue with constant interpretation and supervision throughout the study year. In this way, data collection will be guided by the requirements of the schedule and it is hoped that the proportion of "unknown" responses will not exceed an acceptable level. Procedures for this aspect of the study are designed to avoid the usual shortcomings of retrospective studies which are based on records, the preparation of which is not guided by research requirements.

While the study has control over the design of its instruments, its control over the persons who will complete the instruments, however, is limited. Qualifications of field staff in sampling units vary greatly. Staff turnover in the sampling units is an additional serious problem. The sole counterforce of the study to these unpredictable and uncontrollable interfering forces, and thus the only quality control mechanism of the study, are the three regional directors who are required to maintain constant contact with field staff of sampling units.

Control over cases to be reported from sampling units is exercised from the central study office by means of a simple mechanism. Cases originating in sample units are identified among the central registry reports received at the study office on the basis of the abused child's address prior to the incident. Control cards are punched for each sample unit case and are sent to the sample unit director and to the regional director of the study. One set of control cards is kept at the study office. If investigation of a case in the sample unit results in the ruling out of abuse, the control card is returned to the study office with an

appropriate notation explaining the reason for the elimination. Otherwise a schedule is completed on the case. This system assures that by the end of the study period each case originating in a sampling unit will be accounted for on schedules or on a returned control card, depending on its status.

In developing the schedules special care was taken to use simple language and terms with which social workers tend to be familiar. Definitions of terms, and instructions were kept to a minimum and were incorporated into the schedule whenever possible. (Copy of instructions attached.) Work saving devices were built into the schedule so that respondents would not be required to furnish the same information more than once.

The schedule is completely pre-coded with the exception of one item which requires an open-ended, detailed, factual description of the circumstances surrounding and precipitating the incident of child abuse. This important item, the circumstances of the abuse, will also be explored by means of a special pre-coded instrument (see attached) which was developed empirically on the basis of a content analysis of 140 abuse incidents from the California pilot study. The items of this instrument, while derived empirically from actual case descriptions, correspond also to the conceptual framework of the study.

The research schedules will require thorough editing as well as cross-checking against child abuse report forms dealing with the same incident.

Participation of Non-public Agencies - Arrangements have been worked out with the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Children's Aid Society of Erie County, New York to participate in the study. These agencies will report abuse cases referred to them throughout the study year outside legally established reporting channels. They will use the forms and schedules developed by the study. In this way it will be possible to obtain an estimate of the proportion of abuse cases entering the legal channel versus those that are not reported under the law for one whole state, Massachusetts, and for one populous county in New York state. It will also be possible to compare selected characteristics of the cases entering the legal channels and those who are handled outside the legal channels. This aspect of the study was not included in the original plan, but when the opportunity for it developed it seemed to be a worthwhile refinement of the study, especially since no additional costs are involved.

CALIFORNIA PILOT STUDY

Data collection for a pilot study of child abuse incidents in California was completed in September 1966. While the analysis of these data has not been completed, some preliminary findings can be presented at this time.

In accordance with the California statute on reporting incidents of child abuse, a central registry was established in the Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Identification of the State Department of Justice. The registry began to function on September 17, 1965. By February 16, 1966, five months after the registry began to operate, 1676 $\pm$ 3 incidents had been reported by police authorities from all over the state. A random sample of 421 incidents was selected from all the registered cases on February 17, 1966. These cases were screened against the study definition of physical child abuse. Screening resulted in the elimination of 247 incidents (58.7%) which were classified as non-abuse. 123 incidents (29.2%) were classified as physical child abuse, 13 incidents (3.1%) were classified as marginal cases since no clear decision was possible in relation to them, and 38 incidents (9.0%) had to be excluded from consideration since they were reported prior to September 17, 1965. The foregoing percentages may be extrapolated to the entire universe of 1676 $\pm$ 3 incidents from which they had been selected at random. Accordingly, within five months approximately 489 incidents of physical child abuse were reported from all over California. Assuming a stable monthly reporting rate, one arrives at an estimate of 1174 reported incidents of physical child abuse during the first year of legal reporting in California.

The 247 Non-Abuse cases were classified on the basis of police crime reports. This classification is presented below.

NON-ABUSE CASES CLASSIFIED BY TYPE

	Number	Percentage
Neglect	125	50.6
Sex Abuse	58	23.5
Child Stealing	21	8.5
Abandonment	10	4.0
Endangering lives of children/Contributing to the deliquency of minors	8	3.2
Death Report	8	3.2
Desertion	4	1.6
False Accusation	3	1.2
Assault and Battery by non-caretaker	1	0.4
Burglary	1	0.4
Other*	4	1.6
Unclassifiable	4	1.6
TOTAL	247	100.0

* Rape of Mother
Attempted Suicide by Mother
Injuries Inflicted by Children
Wife Beating

The 123 physical abuse incidents were traced to their communities of origin and information concerning them was collected from records of public welfare departments, courts and hospitals who had known the cases in connection with offering service and treatment. Data were collected by a member of the study staff by means of a special research schedule.

The 123 incidents involved 140 victims. 114 incidents involved 1 victim per incident, 9 incidents involved 2 to 4 victims per incident. 142 caretakers were suspected as perpetrators in the 123 incidents. In 105 incidents 1 perpetrator was suspected, in 17 incidents 2 perpetrators, and in 1 incident 3 perpetrators.

Various characteristics of the 140 victims are described below. All distributions are shown in percentages. Unless indicated otherwise, the base is 140.

1. Sex (Victim)

Male	45
Female	55

2. Age (Victim)

Under 1	11.4
1 to under 2	5.0
2 to under 3	11.4
3 to under 4	12.1
4 to under 6	9.3
6 to under 9	10.0
9 to under 12	15.7
12 to under 15	15.0
15 to under 17	9.3
17 to under 18	0.7

3. Ethnic Background (Victim)

White	66.4
Negro	15.7
American Indian	0.7
Mexican	13.6
Other	2.9
Unknown	0.7

4. Religious Background (Victim)

Roman Catholic	33.6
Christian, other than Roman Catholic	42.1
Other	0.7
Unknown	23.6

5. De Facto Custody of Victim

Both parents	42.9
Mother and stepfather	26.4
Father and stepmother	5.0
Mother only	19.3
Father only	1.4
Unknown	3.6

6. Legal Status of Victim

Legitimate as of birth	75.7
Born out of wedlock, legitimized	2.9
Born out of wedlock, not legitimized	7.1
Born in wedlock, not by mother's husband	0.7
Unknown	13.6

7. Whereabouts of Victim's Biological Father

In child's home	50.7
Deceased	3.6
Not in child's home, whereabouts known	15.0
whereabouts unknown	22.1
Unknown	8.6

8. Whereabouts of Victim's Biological Mother

In child's home	88.6
Deceased	2.1
Not in child's home, whereabouts known	5.0
Unknown	4.3

9. Physical Condition (Victim)

Normal	83.6
Deviations from normal	5.0
Unknown	11.4

10. Intellectual Functioning (Victim)

Normal	84.3
Deviations from normal	2.1
Unknown	13.6

11. Social and Behavioral Functioning (Victim)

Normal	82.1
Deviations from normal	4.3
Unknown	13.6

12. School Placement (Victim)

Under school age	47.9
Of school age, never attended	1.4
Age-appropriate placement	33.6
Below age-appropriate placement	2.1
Unknown	15.0

13. Victim's Involvement in Juvenile Court prior to Incident

None	82.9
Were involved	2.9
Unknown	14.3

14. Victim's Placement Away from Home prior to Incident

None	80.7
Were placed	5.7
Unknown	13.6

15. Victim's Involvement in Previous Incidents of Child Abuse

None	33.6
Involved previously as victims	34.3
Involved previously as perpetrators	0.7
Unknown	31.4

16. Constellation of Victim's Household

Female-headed household	20.0
Male-headed household	2.1
Male and female-headed household	77.9

The following items describe selected characteristics of the male and female heads of household with whom the 140 children were living prior to the abuse incidents. Distributions are again presented in percentages; however, the base for the percentages is different for male and female heads of household since, as shown in Table 16 above, some of the 140 children lived in single headed households. Accordingly the base for tables describing male heads is 112, and for tables describing female heads is 137.

17. Relationship of Household Heads to Victim

	Male (N=112)	Female (N=137)
Biological parent	62.50	91.97
Step parent	33.04	5.11
Foster parent	-----	1.46
Other relationship	4.46	-----
Unknown	-----	1.46

18. Age of Household Heads

	Male (N=112)	Female (N=137)
under 20	0.89	8.03
20 to under 25	19.64	24.82
25 to under 30	16.07	18.25
30 to under 40	36.61	35.77
40 to under 50	14.29	4.38
50 to under 60	6.25	0.73
Unknown	6.25	8.03

19. Ethnic Background of Household Heads

	Male (N=112)	Female (N=137)
White	71.43	64.49
Negro	13.39	13.87
American Indian	-----	0.73
Mexican	10.71	13.87
Other	1.79	1.46
Unknown	2.68	5.11

20. Education of Household Heads

	Male (N=112)	Female (N=137)
6 to 11 grades	22.32	31.39
High School graduate	27.68	37.96
High School and Vocational School	9.82	0.73
Some college	2.68	-----
College graduate	0.89	-----
Unknown	36.61	29.93

21. Employment of Household Heads During Year Preceding Incident

	Male (N=112)	Female (N=137)
Employed throughout entire year	50.00	8.03
Employed part of year	13.39	13.14
Not interested in work outside home	-----	52.55
Unknown	36.61	26.28

22. Customary Employment of Household Heads

	Male (N=112)	Female (N=137)
Professional	0.89	-----
Managerial	0.89	-----
Clerical	2.68	7.30
Sales Worker	3.57	2.92
Craftsman	21.43	-----
Operative	27.68	2.19
Household Worker	-----	2.92
Service Worker	8.04	16.06
Farm Worker	0.89	-----
Laborer (non-farm)	8.04	-----
Own home only	-----	52.55
Unknown	25.89	16.06

23. Criminal Record of Household Heads

	Male (N=112)	Female (N=137)
None	46.43	74.45
Yes	40.18	5.84
Unknown	13.39	19.71

24. Involvement of Household Heads in Current Incident of Child Abuse

	Male (N=112)	Female (N=137)
Not involved	23.21	51.09
Involved	72.32	43.80
Unknown	4.46	5.11

25. Involvement of Household Heads in Previous Incidents of Child Abuse

	Male (N=112)	Female (N=137)
Not involved	27.68	50.36
Involved as victim	0.89	1.46
Involved as perpetrator	32.14	14.60
Unknown	39.29	33.58

The following tables present selected characteristics of the household units of the 140 abused children. The base figure for percentages in this section is 140.

26. Number of Persons in Household Excluding Victim

1 or 2	23.6
3 or 4	45.0
5 or 6	18.6
7 or 8	1.4
9 or 10	2.1
Unknown	9.3

27. Number of Children

Victim is only child	23.6
Victim is not only child	64.2
Unknown	12.1

28. Marital Status of Household Heads

2 heads in household, legally married	60.7
2 heads in household, not legally married	7.9
Single head in household, widowed	2.1
Single head in household, divorced	12.1
Single head in household, separated	3.6
Single head in household, deserted	2.1
Single head in household, was never married	1.4
Unknown	10.0

29. Annual Income

Under 2,000	1.4
2,000 to under 3,000	5.7
3,000 to under 4,000	9.3
4,000 to under 6,000	20.0
6,000 to under 8,000	14.3
8,000 to under 10,000	2.1
10,000 to under 12,000	2.1
Over 15,000	0.7
Unknown	44.3

30. Annual Per Capita Income

250 to under 500	5.0
500 to under 750	2.9
750 to under 1,000	7.9
1,000 to under 1,500	22.9
1,500 to under 2,000	12.1
2,000 to under 2,500	2.1
2,500 to under 3,000	2.1
Over 3,000	0.7
Unknown	44.3

31. Stability of Income

Stable	55.7
Unstable	10.7
Unknown	33.6

32. Members of Household Earning Income

No earned income	6.4
Male head only	44.3
Female head only	12.1
Male and Female head	10.0
Other	2.1
Unknown	25.0

33. Income Maintenance from Public Welfare Programs

None	66.9
AFDC	6.5
Other	2.1
Unknown	24.5

34. Income from Public Insurance Programs

None	61.9
Social security	2.2
Unemployment compensation	1.4
Social security and unemployment compensation	0.7
Social security and other	0.7
Unknown	33.1

35. Services from Public Welfare Agencies

Never received services	52.1
Received services	17.8
Unknown	30.0

36. Services from Voluntary Welfare Agencies

Never received services	58.6
Received services	0.7
Unknown	40.7

37. Type of Housing

Public housing apartment	4.3
Rented apartment in private building	25.0
Rented house from private owner	29.3
Own house - mortgaged	12.9
Own house - paid off	0.7
Other	4.3
Unknown	23.6

38. Ecologic Classification

Rural	5.8
Suburban	14.4
Urban	65.5
Unknown	14.4

39. Quality of Neighborhood

Deteriorated, sub-standard	4.3
Adequately maintained, standard	66.7
Better than adequately maintained - above standard	0.7
Unknown	28.3

Since over 90% of the 142 suspected perpetrators were parent or parent substitutes with whom the victims were living prior to the abusive incident, the tables describing parents and parent substitutes of the victims and their households are also an approximate description of the perpetrators and their households. Therefore only a few additional tables are presented below concerning the perpetrators. The base figure for these tables is 142.

40. Perpetrators' Sex

Male	60.0
Female	39.3
Unknown	0.7

41. Perpetrators' Age

Under 20	5.0
20 to under 25	24.1
25 to under 30	17.7
30 to under 40	35.5
40 to under 50	9.2
50 to under 60	5.7
Unknown	2.8

42. Perpetrators' Relationship to Victim

Biological parent	66.0
Step parent (legal and non-legal)	24.1
Sibling	0.7
Boy friend of mother or substitute	5.7
Unrelated baby sitter	2.8
Other	0.7

43. Perpetrator's Role in Victim's Household

Male head	54.6
Female head	35.5
Other member	1.4
Not member of household	8.5

44. Past Criminal Convictions of Perpetrators

None	53.9
Yes	31.2
Unknown	14.9

45. Previous Involvement in Child Abuse Incidents

None	23.4
Involved as perpetrators	34.8
Involved as victims	1.4
Unknown	40.4

The final set of tables presents information on selected circumstances of the abusive incidents sustained by the 140 children.

46. Month of Incident

Sept.'65 (2 weeks)	18.2
Oct. '65	18.2
Nov. '65	21.2
Dec. '65	19.7
Jan. '66	21.2
Feb. '66 (2 weeks)	1.5

47. Time of Day

0:01 to 3 a.m.	2.9
3:01 to 6 a.m.	1.4
6:01 to 9 a.m.	5.7
9:01 to 12 noon	14.3
12:01 to 3 p.m.	11.4
3:01 to 6 p.m.	19.3
6:01 to 9 p.m.	21.4
9:01 to midnight	6.4
Unknown	17.1

48. Place of Occurrence

Child's home	86.4
Perpetrator's home (other than child's home)	5.7
Public place	0.7
Other	5.0
Unknown	2.1

49. Injuries Sustained
(because of mulitple injuries percentages exceed 100)

No injuries	6.4
Bruises, welts	74.3
Malnutrition	2.1
Burns, scalding	10.7
Abrasions, lacerations	25.0
Wounds, cuts, punctures	14.3
Internal injuries	2.1
Bone fractures (not skull)	8.6
Skull fractures	3.6
Brain damage	1.4
Other injuries	24.3

50. Medical Verification of Injuries

Yes	59.3
No	31.4
Unknown	9.3

51. Primary Manner of Infliction of Injuries (because of multiple injuries percentages exceed 100)

Beating with hands	59.3
Beating with instruments	46.4
Kicking	5.7
Strangling, suffocating	2.1
Stabbing, slashing	0.7
Burning, scalding	10.7
Deliberate neglect or exposure	7.1
Locking in or tying	4.3
Other	20.9

52. Seriousness of Injuries

Not serious	71.5
Serious, no permanent damage	16.5
Serious, permanent damage	2.1
Death	1.4
Unknown	8.5

53. Medical Verification of Seriousness of Injuries

Yes	31.0
No	58.0
Unknown	11.0

54. Initiation of Help for Victim Subsequent to Incident (because of multiple initiation percentages exceed 100)

Suspected perpetrator	12.2
Members of victim's household - non-perpetrators	34.5
School or child care personnel	12.9
Neighbors	13.7
Others	35.3

55. Resource First Contacted for Assistance

Private M.D.	2.9
Hospital or clinic	11.8
Police	80.9
Unknown	4.4

56. Medical Treatment Rendered to Victim

None	33.3
Hospitalization up to 1 week	10.3
Hospitalization more than 1 week	3.0
Medical treatment, 1 visit	39.3
Medical treatment, more than 1 visit	3.7
Unknown	10.4

57. Court Involvement Following Incident

Yes	51.4
No	39.3
Unknown	9.3

58. Social Agency Involvement Following Incident

Yes	8.6
No	83.6
Unknown	7.9

59. Placement of Victim Following Incident

Yes	22.9
No	64.3
Unknown	12.9

60. Indictment of Suspected Perpetrator Following Incident

Yes	39.3
No	45.7
Unknown	15.0

Comments:
While thorough interpretation of the data presented here must be postponed until after the completion of the entire analysis, several observations can be suggested at this point.

a) The age distribution of victims, their parents or parent substitutes, and of the suspected perpetrators is approximately normal. It is definitely not skewed towards the younger and very young age groups.

b) More girls than boys were abused, and more males than females were suspected as perpetrators.

c) The ethnic distribution of victims and perpetrators seems to differ somewhat from the ethnic distribution of the California population.

d) Nearly all perpetrators are parents or parent substitutes of the victims. Two thirds are biological parents, one fourth are step parents, about 6% are boy friends of the mother, and about 3% are non-related baby sitters.

e) The family constellation of victims tends to differ from the normal nuclear, biological family constellation. In 43% of the cases victims were living with both their biological parents. In over 25% they lived with a mother and step-father. In 20% they lived with the mother. The biological father was living in the victim's home in 50% of the cases. The biological mother was in the home in 89% of the cases. The illegitimacy rate of victims seems not to differ from the rate in the U.S. population.

f) The victims as a group seem not to deviate significantly from the general population of children on such variables as physical and mental health, intellectual and social functioning, school performance.

g) Descriptive data on perpetrators are limited. One significant item seems to be a high rate of past criminal convictions. Nearly one third of the perpetrators have been convicted for various offenses and crimes.

h) While information concerning previous incidents of child abuse is incomplete, it is known that more than one third of the victims have been abused before. It is also known that at least one third of the perpetrators have been involved in previous abuse incidents.

i) Information concerning the socio-economic status of the victim's household is limited. From available information on income, source of income, occupation, education and housing it seems that the households in this sample tend to belong to lower socio-economic strata of society. In this context possible bias of the reporting channels is likely to have been a factor.

j) About two thirds of the cases were reported from urban areas, about 15% from suburban, and about 6% from rural areas. Ecologic classification was not ascertained for about 14%.

k) In about three fourths of the incidents the injuries inflicted upon the victims were not considered serious. Less than 1.5% of the victims died, and 2% suffered injuries resulting in permanent damage. Serious injuries tended to be correlated with young age of the victims and non-white ethnic background.

l) Few incidents, approximately 5%, fit the "battered child syndrome" which has been described and defined in medical and social welfare literature. (Multiple bone fractures in various stages of healing, emotional apathy of caretakers regarding victims and injuries, repeated battering, etc.).

m) Content analysis of circumstances of abuse suggests that severe disciplinary measures taken in response to misconduct of victims, as perceived by the perpetrator, constitute the most prevalent factor of abuse. These severe disciplinary measures seem correlated with inadequately controlled anger on the part of the perpetrator. Another element of abuse seems to be resentment and rejection of a specific child as a person, or some specific qualities of a child, such as his sex, his capacities, his birth status, etc. Such total resentment or rejection seems correlated with repeated abuse of the same child.

Quite frequently abuse of a child develops out of a quarrel between his adult caretakers. In many instances abuse also coincides with elements of neglect. Alcoholic intoxication seems to be a precipitating factor of abuse in many instances. Marked mental and emotional deviations on the part of perpetrators was an infrequent element in the sample. Sadistic gratification of the perpetrator also seems to be an infrequent element, however physical abuse coinciding with, or as a sequence to sexual advances occurred in several cases.

Mounting stress due to environmental circumstances was an element in several cases. Finally, one specific noteworthy circumstance is the temporary absence of the mother during which a stepfather or boy friend takes care of a child.

n) Of special interest is the fact that social welfare agencies were involved in less than 10% of the sample cases. The courts, on the other hand, were involved in over 50% of the cases. Victims were removed from their homes subsequent to the incident in about 25% of the cases. Quite often siblings of victims were also removed from the home. The low involvement rate of social agencies and the high involvement rate of the courts may be due to the fact that child abuse reports are handled by the police in California.

SURVEY OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES CONCERNING CHILD ABUSE

Data processing and analysis of the survey of public knowledge and attitudes concerning child abuse which was conducted during 1965 has been nearly completed. Preparation of a detailed report on this component of the study had to be delayed however because of unexpected limitations of study resources and staff in last year's budget authorization. When these limitations were set early in 1966, it seemed indicated to give priority to the development and execution of the nationwide 1967 survey, and to delay the preparation of reports on data which had already been secured.

REPORTS AND INTERPRETATION

Throughout the development and conduct of this study insights and observations unravelled by it have been shared freely with Children's Bureau staff, with other public and non-public organizations, and with news media. One possible shortcoming of this liberal flow of information has been that information is made available to the field before it is sufficiently tested. The tentative nature of all such freely communicated information is always emphasized, but in spite of this, misinterpretations and over-simplification of issues occur.

In accordance with the foregoing "open" policy progress reports on the study and on tentative findings were presented during 1966 at the following conferences and meetings.

National Conference on Social Welfare

CWLA Regional Conference, Washington, D.C.

University of Virginia, Symposium on Childhood Accidents

University of Colorado, Symposium on Child Abuse

APWA, Southern Regional Conference, Charleston, S.C.

APWA, Western Regional Conference, Portland, Oregon

Kansas State Conference of Juvenile Court Judges

Mississippi State Conference of Juvenile Court Judges

Harvard University School of Public Health, Department of Maternal and Child Health

NASW Research Council, Boston, Massachusetts

NASW Chapter Meeting, Worcester, Massachusetts

Pennsylvania Annual State Health Conference

In addition to conference papers, interviews were given on NBC and ABC TV programs and also to several press reporters.

One paper on the study was published by the NCSW in "Social Work Practice. 1966", and another paper is being published during 1967 in a book on child abuse by the University of Chicago Press. (copies attached)

FUTURE PLANS

In accordance with the timetable submitted to the Children's Bureau as part of the study design in 1966, the field work for the nationwide survey of child abuse incidents, reported through legal channels, is scheduled for completion on June 30, 1968. This date is six months after the terminal day of the study year, 1967, during which the study cohort is being recruited. During these final six months data will be collected and reported on incidents occurring during the latter part of the study year, and the regional directors of the study will be involved in clearing all outstanding cases, as well as obtaining additional information on inadequately reported cases.

As of July 1, 1968 study activities will no longer involve field operations since all case reports and research schedules from the field will have been submitted by then to the study office. It is expected that the processing, analysis, reporting and interpretation of the voluminous data obtained from the survey can be completed by June 30, 1969, one year after the termination of the field work. Data processing, analysis, reporting and interpretation will be carried out by a small professional and technical staff. The work of the three regional directors of the study is scheduled to be terminated with the completion of the field work phase in June 1968.

It is suggested at this time to consider the introduction of a possible additional element into the survey during the 1967/68 period. This element is a clinical study of all abuse cases reported in two sampling units within Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Division of Child Guardianship has agreed to the conduct of such a supplementary study, which will consist of standardized clinical interviews by a member of the study staff with families reported for child abuse from the Massachusetts sampling units. Such interviews could supply clinical data which cannot be obtained by the general survey methods of the two levels of the study. The interviews could also provide a reliability check, in one state, for the data collected by means of the research schedules. The substudy suggested here can be carried out by a research social worker with clinical experience aided by a research technician and part-time secretary. These positions have been included in the 1967/68 budget proposal.

The original study proposal submitted last year to the Children's Bureau presented the survey of legally reported child abuse as one stage in a multi-stage exploration of the phenomenon of child abuse. Additional stages were suggested at the time involving:

1) Studies of cases known to the medical network but not reported through legal channels;

2) studies of cases obtained through surveys of randomly selected households;

3) studies of cases among special population groups such as families of military personnel, American Indians, etc.;

4) cross-cultural studies of the phenomenon beyond the confines of the United States;

5) studies utilizing clinical approaches designed to explore aspects of the phenomenon which cannot be unravelled by means of survey research methods;

6) controlled studies of existing and specially developed health, welfare and law enforcement intervention methods.

These studies were suggested since it was clear that the survey of legally reported cases would not answer all questions concerning the phenomenon of child abuse because of the possible bias inherent in legal reporting mechanisms, and because of limitations which survey research methods impose on the data.

While it seems that by means of all or some of the studies listed above, much can be learned about child abuse beyond what is expected to be learned from the nationwide survey of legally reported cases, a decision to pursue this line of inquiry, and to develop programmatic research focused on the phenomenon of child abuse is a policy decision to be made by the Children's Bureau within the context of a broad child welfare research strategy. Detailed plans for any of the studies sketched above will be developed and submitted if a positive decision is made by the Children's Bureau with regard to the development of programmatic research on child abuse. Because of the many difficulties in recruiting and training staff for research teams, it would seem important to reach such a decision before the team which is now working on the child abuse survey is dissolved.

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